

THE ASYLUM

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Kolbe & Fanning
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numislit.com

*If I were asked who is
the happiest man, I would reply,
a booklover.*

*Whence it results that
happiness is an old book.*

Paul Lacroix



The Asylum

Vol. 33, No. 2

Consecutive Issue No. 128

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Front cover: A group of coins from Plate I of the plated version of Thomas Elder's 1911 sale of the William H. Woodin collection.



The Rare Plated Woodin Catalogue: Tom Elder's Epic Gold Sale

David Stone

Prominent coin dealer Thomas Lindsay Elder issued 292 auction catalogues during his long career in numismatics, handling some of the finest collections of the early twentieth century. Twenty-three of those catalogues, including such landmark sales as Peter Gschwend (June 1908), James B. Wilson (October 1908), Peter Mougey (September 1910), Henry C. Miller (April 1917 and May 1920), and George Alfred Lawrence (June 1929), were issued in special editions with photographic plates. With the possible exception of the Wilson sale, all these catalogues are very elusive today. In *United States Numismatic Literature*, Volume II, respected researcher and collector John Adams notes "...the importance of the material depicted and the rarity of the plated copies turn these into great desiderata." None of these famous and important Elder sales are more difficult to locate with plates than the William H. Woodin Collection of March 2-4, 1911.

WILLIAM HARTMAN WOODIN

William H. Woodin (May 27, 1868-May 3, 1934) was a prominent industrialist who became Secretary of the Treasury in President Franklin Roosevelt's administration. He began collecting English coins in the mid-1880s, but switched his focus to U.S. gold in 1888, after meeting John Colvin Randall, who acted as a mentor during his early years of collecting. In the period from 1888 to 1910, Woodin formed one of the greatest collections of U.S. gold coins of all time, including extensive runs of all gold denominations and featuring such fabulous rarities as the unique 1870-S three-dollar gold piece.

Woodin's numismatic interests changed again around 1910, when he acquired a treasure trove of pattern coins from the collection of the former superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint, Archibald Loudon

Snowden. Woodin secured his hoard of patterns in a three-way exchange between himself, Snowden, and the Mint, in which he returned the two specimens of the unique 1877 Half Union patterns in gold (Judd 1546 and 1548), which he had acquired in a transaction brokered by John W. Haseltine and Stephen Nagy. Having largely completed his gold collection, Woodin decided to sell most of his holdings to concentrate on building a definitive collection of U.S. patterns. He retained his collection of half eagles, as he was still working on a study of die varieties with Edgar Adams (he sold these privately to Waldo Newcomer in the 1920s), and his four-dollar Stellas, which he considered patterns, but he consigned the bulk of his fabulous gold collection to Thomas Elder, a dealer he had done extensive business with before. A scholar as well as a collector, Woodin partnered with numismatic researcher Edgar Adams to write *United States Pattern, Trial, and Experimental Pieces* (published in 1913), which became the standard reference for the series for decades.¹

THE SALE OF THE WOODIN COLLECTION

In the January 1911 issue of *The Numismatist*, Elder announced the sale of Woodin's collection in a half-page ad on page 39 (see Figure 1). A brief mention of the sale was also included in "The Month's Miscellany" section of the magazine on page 5. He followed up by sending a copy of the catalogue to the editors and they previewed the sale in the "Periodicals and Catalogues Received" section on page 71 of the following issue. Among the coins featured in these notices were the complete sets of gold dollars and three-dollar gold pieces, some rare territorial gold issues, and a remarkable run of proof eagles, including the 1838, 1843, 1844-O, 1848, and 1858, all incredible rarities.² There were twenty-one varieties of eagles dated before 1805. Although overshadowed by the rare gold issues, many silver rarities were also included in the collection, like the 1796 and 1797 half dollars, an 1827 restrike quarter, and an 1802 half dime.

Elder produced a catalogue worthy of the collection, with much more detail in the lot descriptions than was typical at the time. Many of the important lots included pedigree information, price records, and mintage figures. Eighteen high-quality photographic plates were shot by Edgar

¹ Thanks to Saul Teichman and USPatterns.com for much of this information.

² Saul Teichman reports all five of these coins were purchased by Virgil Brand, according to his journal entries.

JANUARY, 1911

39

Sale of William H. Woodin Collection of American Coins

WILLIAM H. WOODIN, Esq., of New York City, desiring to specialize in certain lines of coin collecting, has turned over to me for **Absolute Sale** during the **First Week of March**, his

Magnificent Collection of American Coins

Including all of his choice and rare Double Eagles, Eagles, Quarter Eagles. Complete Set of Gold Dollars, some choice Patterns, and

The Only Complete Set of Three Dollar Gold Pieces in Existence, with the Unique 1870 Piece of the San Francisco Mint.

QUARTER EAGLES, practically complete, including 1828, and lacking only 1841 P. and 1855 D.

THREE DOLLAR, SERIES COMPLETE, including the 1873, 1875, 1876, 1877 in proof, and the 1870 S. Mint.

TEN DOLLARS, set includes 1838, 1843, 1844 O, 1848 and 1858, all brilliant proofs. All of the old ones, including the 1796, 13 stars, vary rare.

SILVER. Five early Dollars with Mint Marks. Several hundred Half Dollars, including 1796 and 1797. Quarters, Dimes, Half Dimes, including 1802. Minor Coins, Cents, Half Cents, Etc.

Plain Catalogue **FREE**. Plate Catalogues, with plates guaranteed to be good and printed price list, **\$5.00**. Priced List after the Sale, **\$1.50**.

THOMAS L. ELDER, Cataloguer

32 East Twenty Third Street

NEW YORK CITY

Figure 1. Announcement of the Woodin sale.

Adams, including images of most of the important coins. Elder devoted a full page to the description of the 1870-S three-dollar gold piece in lot 1160 (see Figure 2). The outstanding run of proof eagles was described on pages 58 and 59 of the catalogue and pictured on Plate XV (see Figure 3). These plates are invaluable to pedigree researchers, as they make it possible to trace the history of some of the most important coins in the U.S. gold series. For example, the image of the 1858 proof Liberty eagle in lot 1223 shows the distinctive mark in the field near star 12 that identifies it as the Trompeter coin, the only example of this issue in private hands today (compare Figures 3 and 4). John Adams rates this sale A+ overall, with an A+ rating in gold, B+ in half cents, and B+ in early silver.

The sale was a huge financial success, realizing \$16,849.89, a remarkable total for that era (Figure 5). The 1870-S three-dollar gold piece was the star of the sale, realizing a staggering \$1,450. In their review of the sale in the March issue of *The Numismatist*, page 96, the editors remarked: "So many high priced coins were offered at the Woodin sale

1870 SAN FRANCISCO THREE DOLLARS!

1160 1870. San Francisco. General types identical to preceding, but the mint mark is smaller and narrower than usual. Over the wreath on reverse appear two or three minute scratches, which are hardly noticeable to the ordinary eye. The piece evidently has at one time had a loop attached. The milling appears regular.

A reserve price of \$1,000 is placed upon this lot.

Facts Regarding The Coin.

Accompanying this coin is the indisputable certificate of its genuineness, written in ink on a piece of yellow paper by the coiner of the San Francisco Mint in 1870, Mr. J. B. Harmstead, which reads as follows:

"This Three Dollar piece is a duplicate of one under the cornerstone of the San Francisco Mint and the only one in existence.
J. B. Harmstead."

The coin came from the family of Mr. Harmstead, wrapped in the above note.

Newspaper clippings state that in 1870, when the cornerstone of the new San Francisco Mint was laid, one specimen of each variety of the coins of the United States was placed in the corner-stone.

Under date of May 22nd, 1907, Mr. Dan Cole, the present coiner at the San Francisco Mint, wrote as follows:

"The new mint building at our present location, 5th and Mission Streets, was commenced in 1870 and was completed in 1874, and Mr. J. B. Harmstead was then coiner."

This letter also accompanies the coin.

Several of the greatest numismatists in the United States who have given the coin careful examination, say the piece is authentic and official, basing their decisions more on its general appearance and workmanship than on any written certificate or letter.

Undoubtedly this is the most remarkable gold coin of the regular series, and is, naturally, the only one which will ever be offered at public or private sale.

Figure 2. Catalogue description of lot 1160.





Figure 4. Trompeter example of 1858 proof Liberty eagle, with the mark that identifies it as the same coin as lot 1223 in the Woodin sale.

held by Thomas L. Elder that we can only record such pieces as brought \$100.00 or more.”

They proceeded to list thirteen coins and the prices they realized, including the featured run of proof eagles. Woodin was so delighted with the results that he wrote an article in the May 1911 issue of *The Numismatist*, outlining his collecting strategy and demonstrating the high financial rewards of coin collecting.

RARITY AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE PLATED CATALOGUES

In his introduction to the sale, Elder described the plated catalogue in a separate notice, stating “...this catalogue will contain no less than fifteen plates of American gold coins...only 20 plate catalogues have been made.” The price for a plated catalogue was \$5, but this included a printed prices-realized list, a \$1.50 value, as well. In point of fact, Elder increased the number of plates to eighteen (including two plates of silver coins and one of copper), and he may have limited the print run to fewer than twenty catalogues, as the issue has always been very rare and fewer than half that number are known to numismatists today. Jack Collins told Dan Hamelberg his research indicated only ten examples of the plated catalogue were actually produced.³

Elder compiled another 244 auction catalogues after the Woodin sale (his 48th sale). The author was able to study copies of 68 of these catalogues before this article went to print, a sampling that is far from complete, but large enough to be statistically meaningful. Scattered

³ E-mail from D.H. to the author, February 6, 2015.

PRICES
 REALIZED AT THE SALE
 OF THE
Collection of Rare American Coins
 of **WILLIAM H. WOODIN, Esqr.,**
 OF NEW YORK CITY.
MARCH 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1911.

CATALOGUED BY THOMAS L. ELDER,
 32 East Twenty-third Street, New York City.

Total Amount Realized \$16,849.89.

Record Prices for American Coins: Gold: \$1, 1854 \$65; Quarter Eagles: 1843, \$94, 1848, \$95, 1863, \$141, 1867 D, \$75; Three Dollars: 1855, \$83, 1857, \$87, 1865, \$81, 1867, \$55, 1870, San Francisco Mint, \$1450, 1875, \$610; Ten Dollars: 1798, over 1797, (6 stars before bust) \$410, 1804, \$101, 1838, \$200, 1843, \$100, 1848, \$100.

No.	Brought	No.	Brought	No.	Brought	No.	Brought	No.	Brought
1	\$100 00	24	1 45	50	7 00	75	3 00	102	90
1a	15 25	25	1 20	51	2 10	76	1 80	103	95
2	15 00	26	1 50	52	8 00	77	30 00	104	80
3	17 50	27	3 50	53	2 00	78	60 00	105	80
4	5 00	28	6 25	54	4 50	79	3 25	106	1 25
5	4 50	28a	5 00	55	3 50	80	7 00	107	1 10
6	3 75	29	1 60	56	2 10	81	3 50	108	1 20
7	3 75	30	1 25	57	2 50	82	1 70	109	80
8	7 25	31	2 00	58	1 25	83	1 25	110	90
9	2 75	32	2 25	59	1 15	84	1 50	111	1 25
10	8 25	33	3 00	60	2 25	85	1 45	112	4 00
11	7 50	34	1 85	61	3 35	86	1 25	113	3 90
12	7 50	35	2 75	61a	1 25	87	1 10	114	1 40
13	2 25	36	2 00	61b	1 30	88	1 20	115	1 40
14	2 20	37	2 25	62	85	89	65	116	1 00
14a	2 60	38	2 10	63	1 10	90	1 25	117	1 10
15	22 00	39	1 50	64	80	91	1 30	118	60
16	1 50	40	2 20	65	80	92	55	119	1 30
16a	1 50	41	1 90	66	75	93	2 25	120	60
17	1 25	42	3 25	67	80	94	1 85	121	1 00
18	1 45	43	2 10	68	1 00	95	1 00	122	90
19	1 75	44	2 00	69	80	96	2 25	123	2 00
19a	1 25	45	2 25	70	5 90	97	3 25	124	70
20	85 00	46	1 10	71	4 00	98	2 60	125	1 25
21	1 45	47	2 50	72	3 50	99	1 10	126	70
22	1 20	48	1 35	73	25 00	100	3 00	127	80
23	1 20	49	7 25	74	2 75	101	75	128	1 00

Figure 5. Prices realized for the Woodin sale.

throughout these catalogues were various offerings of other plated Elder sales, including twelve lots that featured a plated James B. Wilson sale, thirteen with a plated Gschwend, eleven with a plated 1917 Miller sale, five with a plated 1920 Miller sale, two with a plated Levick-Hirsch sale, two with a deluxe hardbound Gschwend, two with a plated Ramsey-McCoy-Brown sale, and five with a plated Mougey sale. There were no offers of a plated Woodin sale in these 68 catalogues. One reference is known in the literature to an appearance of two plated Woodin sales in lot 1252 of Elder's catalogue of June 22-24, 1933, but this lot actually contained a regular copy of the sale, without plates or prices, together with an illustrated copy of another publication.⁴ The wording of the description is unclear, causing later researchers to confuse the contents. It seems likely that Elder sold out of plated catalogues immediately after the 1911 sale and had none left over for future offerings. In fact, he may only have produced enough copies to fill the orders he received before the publication date, a number which may have fallen short of his target of twenty copies.

Whatever the size of the initial print run, pre-1980 appearances of the plated catalogue are very elusive. One might expect Edgar Adams to have had a copy of this sale, since he actually took the photographs for the plates and was so closely associated with Woodin over the years. However, when Elder sold Adams's library in his June 1932 auction there was no plated Woodin catalogue in the sale. Likewise, the plated catalogue was missing from the libraries of Lyman Low (Elder, May 1924) and Samuel Hudson Chapman (Elder, April 1932). There were no plated Woodin catalogues in the auction of the famous hoard from Henry Chapman's estate (Harmer, Rooke, February 1970), and there were none in the Wylie Hoard when Frank Katzen marketed that gathering in the late 1970s (the Hoard included 216 Elder catalogues, but no plated Woodin). There was not a copy in the legendary Fuld library when it was auctioned in the early 1970s.

A mysterious copy did appear in lot 1768 of the C. H. Imhoff collection, which was cataloged by B. Max Mehl and sold in December of 1926. That copy was bound with other plated Elder sales dated between 1905 and 1911 in two volumes. None of the copies we know about today are bound with other catalogues, but the Harry Bass specimen is reported to be disbound, so it might have been included in this volume

⁴ Thanks to P. Scott Rubin for this information.

at one time. Alternatively, the catalogue could have been removed from one of the Imhoff volumes and rebound in a custom binding, which would make it a possible early appearance of examples 4, 5, or 7 in the roster below. Of course, the Imhoff specimen may simply be an example that has been lost or destroyed over the years.

One present-day copy is bound in black full morocco, with the plates arranged in the same manner as the original card-covered catalogues. This piece is thought to be a presentation copy. The original recipient of this volume is unknown, but William Woodin himself would be the most logical candidate. The first appearance of this catalogue we can trace with certainty was a private transaction involving John Ford and an unnamed source. According to the catalogue of the John Ford Library, Part I (George Kolbe, June 2004), Ford purchased this example on August 4, 1958, and retained it until he sold his library through Stack's and George Kolbe in the 2004 sale. The August 4 date for Ford's purchase is very close to the 1958 ANA Convention which Ford attended. In *John J. Ford and the "Franklin Hoard"*, page 411, Karl Moulton reveals that Ford traveled to California before the convention "seeing Abe Kosoff to buy some books and check auction lots", so Kosoff may have been the source for this volume.

Reed Hawn is best known for his fabulous coin collection, which included an 1804 dollar, a 1913 Liberty nickel, and an 1827 Original quarter. He also formed a first-rate numismatic library, which included a plated Woodin catalogue, at an early date. Still attentive to numismatic matters today, Hawn reports, "I took Aaron Feldman's advice on buying the book before the coin and purchased all those books and catalogs from him. Many, even Chapman catalogs, at a lot less than a hundred dollars." Hawn sold his library through George Kolbe in 1998, where the plated Woodin sale realized a strong \$3,100.

John Adams graciously informed the author about the copy of the plated Woodin sale in his own library. His copy was not known to most dealers and collectors and it had a mysterious source. Adams noted, "The only clue to its provenance is a yellow ticket marked 449." A diligent search of auction records revealed a plated Woodin catalogue in lot 449 of Public Auction Sale 1033 (Swann Galleries, August 1976) that fits Adams's description of his catalogue perfectly. The numismatic literature in the Swann Galleries sale was from the libraries of F. C. C. Boyd, Julius de Lagerberg, T. James Clarke, and Wayte Raymond, any

one of whom could have obtained this catalogue at a very early date, possibly at the time of publication. Adams notes that John Ford was actually the main consignor to this sale, as he had acquired large portions of the Boyd, Clark, and Raymond libraries over the years and was disposing of his duplicates at the sale. It seems that Ford may have owned three copies of the rare plated Woodin sale at various times in his career.

THE MODERN ERA

The modern era of collecting numismatic literature started around 1980. George Kolbe and Jack Collins started the Numismatic Bibliomania Society that year; Frank Katen finished marketing the Wylie Hoard around that time; a widespread network of numismatic literature dealers, like George Kolbe, Charles Davis, and Cal Wilson, became well established; and John Adams and Martin Gengerke published their important studies on numismatic literature during the following decade. Despite great strides in the hobby, appearances of plated Woodin catalogs remained few and far between. In *American Numismatic Literature* (1991), Charles Davis surveyed more than 100 auctions of numismatic literature held by seventeen different catalogers from 1980 to 1991. His line-item entry for the plated Woodin sale was simply "No sale recorded."

Dan Hamelberg, who has formed possibly the finest and most complete private numismatic library of all time, laid one of the cornerstones of his collection in the early 1990s when he purchased the library of numismatic researcher and author Jack Collins. Collins's library included a plated Woodin sale which was assigned a value of \$3,000 in this transaction.

Armand Champa purchased a copy of the plated Woodin catalogue from legendary numismatic literature dealer Frank Katen on September 10, 1981, for \$2,000. After he acquired a duplicate copy, Champa sold this volume to Dennis Mendelson and it became the first copy to be publicly offered in the modern era when Mendelson sold his library through George Kolbe in October of 1992 (see number 6 in the roster below). Champa's second copy was sold with his library in a series of blockbuster auctions held by Bowers and Merena in 1994 and 1995. It now resides in the library of the American Numismatic Society.⁵ A final example of the plated Woodin sale surfaced in John Ford's library in the 2004 sale (there were two in Ford's holdings at that time, including

⁵ Thanks to David Hill for this information.

the presentation copy), accounting for the eight copies we know about today.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CATALOGUE

The catalogue is a small octavo measuring 22.5 × 17 cm in its original card cover binding (Figure 6). Several examples have been custom bound over the years and the dimensions of each of the bound volumes are given in the individual listings in the roster below. The catalogue consists of 75 numbered pages containing 1602 lots. The eighteen fine photographic plates are bound in before the text in the original binding, an unusual and unwieldy arrangement that was modified by every owner who had his catalogue rebound. Most of the custom-bound copies have the plates following the text, but one example has them interspersed throughout the catalogue. To quote the summary in lot 261 of the 2015 New York Book Auction (Kolbe & Fanning, January 2015)

The first two plates depict rare American silver coins; the next three plates illustrate United States gold dollars and a few private issues, plates 6–8 depict quarter eagles, the next two plates are devoted to \$3.00 pieces, plates 11–13 depict eagles; the next two plates illustrate eagles and three \$50 slugs; plates 16 & 17 depict double eagles, eagles, and a few other gold pieces, and the final plate illustrates large cents and half cents.

Elder's Woodin sale offered one of the most important gatherings of U.S. gold coins of all time. The contents included unique and extremely rare issues in abundance and Elder's scholarship and presentation of the material were both far ahead of the standards of the time. Edgar Adams's fine photography adds an extremely important visual record of the most important coins. The absolute rarity of the plated catalogue and its outstanding research value make it one of the most valuable and sought-after pieces of numismatic literature on the market today. Fortunately for present-day researchers, a fine copy has been preserved in the ANS Library, where it is available for all serious students of numismatics.

ROSTER OF PLATED WOODIN SALES

The catalogues are listed in order of stated grade in their various lot descriptions. David Fanning points out grading standards were not consistent from cataloguer to cataloguer over the period when these sales



Figure 6. Example of the catalogue in original card wraps (no 6 in the roster)

took place and the grades stated may not be an accurate indication of the condition of the individual catalogues relative to one another. Prices realized do not include the buyer's fee.

1. Very Fine. John Jay Ford, acquired on August 4, 1958, possible presentation copy; John Ford Library (George Kolbe, June 2004), lot 445, realized \$11,000. Bound in black full morocco with the plates bound in preceding the text, 21.5 × 16.5 cm.
2. Very Fine. Jack Collins; Dan Hamelberg in the 1990s. Original card covers, plates bound in preceding the text.
3. Very Fine. Aaron Feldman; Reed Hawn; Auction Sale 73 (Kolbe, June 1998), lot 1208, realized \$3,100. Original card covers, plates bound in preceding the text.
4. Very Fine. Possibly Julius de Lagerberg, Wayte Raymond, F. C. C. Boyd, or T. James Clarke; John J. Ford; Public Auction Sale 1033 (Swann Galleries, August 1976), lot 449, realized \$400; John Adams. Untrimmed, bound in contemporary brown buckram with plates bound in following the text, measures 8 3/8 × 6 7/16 inches.
5. Very Fine. Armand Champa Library, Part II (Bowers and Merena, March 1995), lot 1197, realized \$3,800; American Numismatic Society. Bound in tan half calf with coordinating slipcase, with plates bound in following the text, 21 × 14.5 cm.
6. Fine. Frank Katzen; purchased by Armand Champa on September 10, 1981, for \$2,000; Dennis Mendelson, Mendelson Library (Kolbe, October 1992), lot 111, realized \$3,100; Craig Smith; Smith Library (Kolbe, June 2005), lot 145, realized \$5,750; Dave Steine; New York Book Auction (Kolbe & Fanning, January 2015), lot 261, realized \$3,500 to David Stone. Original card covers, untrimmed, plates bound in preceding the text, housed in a custom clamshell box.
7. Fine. John Jay Ford; Ford Library (Kolbe, June 2004), lot 444, realized \$4,000. Bound in russet buckram with the plates bound in following the text, 21 × 16 cm.
8. Disbound, Very Fine. Harry W. Bass, Jr.; Bass Library, Part II (Kolbe, June 1999), lot 272, realized \$2,600. Plates interspersed throughout the text, 23 × 15 cm.

Additional Appearance

- A. C. H. Imhoff Collection (B. Max Mehl, December 1926), lot 1768, bound with other Elder sales of 1905-11 in two volumes

Charles Bushnell's Manuscript "Early Currency"

Ray Williams

On a visit to the ANS Library with Roger Siboni, I had the opportunity to view a hand-written manuscript, written by Charles Bushnell, probably in the 1850s. The manuscript isn't dated, but it is bound in a beautiful, contemporary, approximately 500-page journal. The project obviously started off in an ambitious manner, but it ended after 49 pages.

Great care was taken in writing this manuscript. The penmanship is clean and legible. There are few, if any, corrections of mistakes. The pages are numbered, so he didn't rewrite any pages. This is a painstakingly precise document on the topic of early currency.

The manuscript's contents are mostly a compilation of laws, court accounts, and commerce in colonial Dutch and British America in the 1600s. Transactions using wampum, beaver, tobacco, and barter items are recounted here. Bushnell does stray from the numismatic theme on occasion, bringing to light some of the social and religious laws and life of the times.

After reading the manuscript cover to cover several times, I wanted to know more about Charles Ira Bushnell the man. Of course I've seen the name before in pedigree listings. Bushnell is one of those names I associate with the great collectors of the 1800s. So I went to my library and pulled down *American Numismatics before the Civil War, 1760-1860* by Dave Bowers (published by Bowers & Merena, 1998). In the index, I found thirty different locations where Bushnell was mentioned.

Charles Bushnell was born on July 28, 1821, a date that has been verified by William Swoger in his genealogical research. He seems to have had a passion for numismatics and history, and his numismatic pursuits seem to have been most active in the 1850s. He published his book on tokens in 1858, a scarce book today, which was well written and illustrated, and without a doubt was the standard reference of the day.

On page 111 of *American Numismatics before the Civil War*, Bowers quotes Bushnell writing about himself in the third person.

He would further say that he is now, and has been for several years past, engaged in the preparation of two other works connected with the Numismatology of this country, but of a more extensive and elaborate character. A vast amount of interesting and valuable material has been gathered together, and the result of his labors will be given to the public in due course of time.

I found this quite interesting! Bushnell was working on two manuscripts at the time. In the next paragraph, Bowers states, "Unfortunately for posterity, the 'two other works' never materialized." It appears that these two manuscripts were made available to Crosby in the 1870s when he was writing *The Early Coins of America*. Crosby made several references to the Bushnell manuscript on page 282, concerning New Jersey coppers. Crosby included several direct quotations, crediting the manuscript as the source, all of which are of great importance to students of the New Jersey copper coinage.

It is now my suspicion that this manuscript in the ANS Library, entitled "Early Currency", is one of the two manuscripts that Charles Bushnell was compiling on colonial numismatics—one of the two that Bowers feared were lost to posterity. The hunt should continue to find the second manuscript entitled "Numismatic Notes". It may pop up in some historical society, a library, or a personal collection. I hope it is not lost to the ages.

Bushnell was a contemporary of Montroville Dickeson and John Hickcox. Dickeson published his important *American Numismatical Manual* and Hickcox published the classic *An Historical Account of American Coinage*. I believe that knowing of these works, Bushnell had a much more ambitious publication in mind.

Why did Bushnell not publish a book utilizing all the information in his manuscripts? No one knows for sure, but let me speculate. . . . With many potential authors, the first 80% of the research and writing comes quickly and is fun. That last 20% can be a killer and may take forever. I know that Bushnell accumulated a lot of colonial numismatic information. There was still more he wanted to do, but personal drive, life circumstances, or any number of things prevented him from writing the book. Lending his manuscript information to Crosby must have been his final realization that he wouldn't publish. Once he saw Crosby's *magnum opus*, whatever hopes Bushnell had to publish were put to rest.

Édouard Frossard's Anonymous Auction Catalogues

Thomas D. Harrison

Some time ago, I was taken aback when a friend suggested I would be a prime candidate for passage on Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*. Brant's timeless satirical work, first published in 1494, was a study of human shortcomings. The insightful book met with immense success throughout Europe, in part because of the fine woodcut illustrations and Brant's ability to incorporate nearly every walk of life from society's downtrodden to the most affluent. Ironically, for bibliophiles, the iconic bespectacled Book-Fool received the distinction of being the first passenger to greet the reader. Brant claimed the bibliophile craved rarity more than wisdom and that a fine binding would always trump the text. I later concluded that a conversation regarding several Édouard Frossard auction catalogues prompted my friend's assessment.

For the numismatic bibliophile, collecting Frossard's literary accomplishments is a daunting task. From his informative and entertaining *Numisma*, to his research of half cents, large cents, and Franco-American jetons, to his prolific output of auction catalogues, Frossard left a seemingly endless challenge for the completist. To assemble an original set of *Numisma* is a rare feat indeed, but building a collection of his 175 catalogues, of which 17 are plated and well over 100 are thick-paper special editions, is an inconceivable undertaking. Although the journey may never be completed, there are discoveries to be unearthed along the way.

One find came to light in a group of Frossard catalogues I acquired from David Fanning. While comparing two apparently identical catalogues for Sale 51, dated April 10, 1886, David noted one distinct variation on the title pages.

Catalog A (Figure 1) displays the typical title page with Frossard's name in bold print, while catalog B (Figure 2) exhibits a surprisingly anonymous authorship. The back of the front wrapper provides an additional difference. The catalogue with Frossard's name, which we will

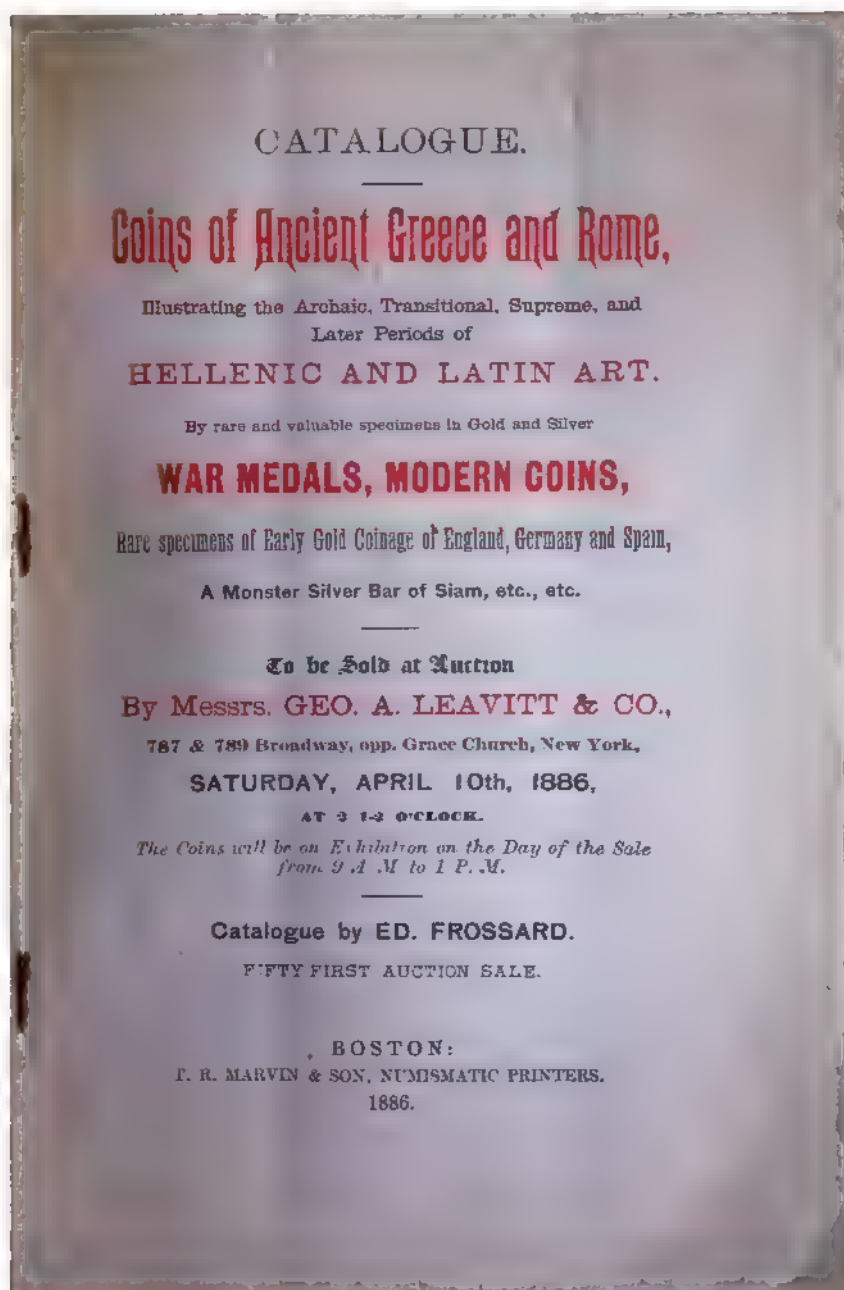


Figure 1. Named catalogue.

CATALOGUE.

Coins of Ancient Greece and Rome,

Illustrating the Archaic, Transitional, Supreme, and
Later Periods of

HELLENIC AND LATIN ART.

By rare and valuable specimens in Gold and Silver.

WAR MEDALS, MODERN COINS,

Rare specimens of Early Gold Coinage of England, Germany and Spain,

A Monster Silver Bar of Siam, etc., etc.

To be Sold at Auction

By Messrs. GEO. A. LEAVITT & CO.,

787 & 789 Broadway, opp. Grace Church, New York,

SATURDAY, APRIL 10th, 1886,

AT 2 1/2 O'CLOCK.

*The Coins will be on Exhibition on the Day of the Sale
from 9 A. M. to 1 P. M.*

BOSTON:

T. R. MARVIN & SON, NUMISMATIC PRINTERS.

1886.

Figure 2. Anonymous catalogue.

refer to as the named copy or catalogue, advertises, "Thick paper copies neatly priced in red ink for Sale at Thirty Cents each." The cataloguer also indicates, "Orders for this and all New York sales, carefully executed by ED. FROSSARD, Numismatist, 787 and 789 Broadway, New York." In contrast, the anonymous catalogue states, "Orders for this sale will be carefully executed by" followed by a space intended for an ink stamp of another dealer who would execute bids for his clients. A third difference is located on the back covers of the catalogues. The named catalogue displays a promotional ad for Geo. A. Leavitt & Co., "New & Spacious Showrooms 787 and 789 Broadway, Opposite Grace Church N.Y." Frossard's name also appears below his solicitation for coins, stamps, bronzes, objects of art, curios, etc. The anonymous catalogue has a blank rear wrapper.

It appears unlikely that T. R. Marvin & Son, numismatic printers of Boston, intentionally printed this anonymous copy without Frossard's knowledge, because some copies of Sale 52 also lack his name. In view of the fact that copies of Sales 51 and 52 are both found named and unnamed, presumably Frossard would have emphatically insisted his name reappear on all Sale 52 catalogues if it omitting his name on the catalogue for sale 51 had been an oversight. The back of the front wrapper of the named copy of Sale 52, dated May 11-12, 1886, is identical to Sale 51 with the exception that Frossard increased the price of his thick-paper catalogs to 40 cents each. The back of the front wrapper of the anonymous copy is blank.

The other discrepancy between his Sale 52 catalogues can be found on the back of the title pages. Both display the American Coin Scale, with the named catalogue adding a note to collectors stating that Frossard frequently represents 50 to 75 buyers at his sales. It also explains he would execute bids at a commission rate of 10% on orders up to \$25.00 and 5% on orders over \$25.00. This page concludes with a stamp of Frossard's name and address, while the unnamed copy only displays the American Coin Scale. Curiously, unlike both observed copies of Sale 51, the anonymous Sale 52 fails to acknowledge the printer—T. R. Marvin & Son. The typical placement of Marvin's name is replaced by a second imprint of George H. Leavitt & Co., Auctioneers.

It is unclear if this enigma resulted from mere printer's negligence or a deliberate rationale for the deviations. Such nuances may seem irrelevant to many collectors, but for those of us who have crossed the threshold

from bibliophile to confirmed bibliomaniac, this realm holds a certain fascination. In some sense it may be akin to the die-state collector searching for a minute letter displacement or an unrecorded die-crack variety. Regardless, now that my ship has set sail, it is time to relish the voyage.

Help Promote the Numismatic Bibliomania Society

Howard A. Daniel III sets up a club table to represent the Numismatic Bibliomania Society (and the International Bank Note Society, Numismatics International, Numismatic Literary Guild, and several other organizations) at the MPC Fest, the International Paper Money Show, and the summer FUN Show. Howard will no longer set up at American Numismatic Association events and the January FUN Show.

The Asylum and NBS membership applications are given to numismatists interested in our society from the table. Journals and applications from other societies are also given out.

There are also world bank notes and coins to give to young and new numismatists in a packet which includes a consolidated membership application form for all of the groups. References are also given out, especially to teachers and scout counselors for them to use with their students and scouts.

Howard always needs volunteers to staff the table and needs your unwanted references, journals, world banknotes, and/or world coins. Please contact him at hadaniel3@msn.com to make donation arrangements. The best method is to take them to him at one of the shows or events he attends, otherwise you can mail them to him. Howard will reply with a thank-you letter which will describe the donation for tax purposes.

Off the Shelf: Spasskii's *The Russian Monetary System*

David F. Fanning

Ivan Georgievich Spasskii was one of the most prominent Russian numismatists of the Soviet era and did much to establish the State Hermitage Museum's institutional emphasis on scientific numismatic study (Figure 1). Born in 1904, Spasskii came of age during the initial period of the Communist Revolution, receiving his early education in his hometown of Nizhyn in Ukraine. He continued his studies at Leningrad University in linguistics and in material culture. His interest in numismatics appeared early on, and he conducted some of his first work on coins used in folk jewelry.

The late Russian Imperial period saw the publication of a number of exceptional numismatic works. From the works of Chertkov and Chaudoir in the 1830s to Giel and Tolstoi in the 1880s and 1890s, and perhaps culminating in the multivolume *Монеты Царствования* of Grand Duke Georgii Mikhailovich¹ (still being produced when the war brought the project to an end), Russian numismatic literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is unusually rich.

Some numismatic scholars, like Ilyin and Oreshnikov, managed to survive the Revolution, but many others did not. Coin collecting was

¹ *Монеты Царствования* [Coins of the Emperors] The Georgii Mikhailovich corpus is the landmark work in Imperial Russian numismatics. S. G. Gromachevskii has written that it is a "colossal and classic scientific work which has no equal in the Russian or in the entire foreign field of numismatic literature. Especially important for the coverage of monetary history through the inclusion of a vast wealth of hitherto inaccessible documentation. Each volume contains a well-focused summary covering the technical and fiscal aspects of the coinage it deals with, along with succinct, precise descriptions of the coins. A fully developed index in each volume covers persons, coins, subjects, etc. The edition is stunningly deluxe, with paper of the highest quality, elegant typography and superb photographic illustrations of the coins" translated from Gromachevskii, *Библиографический указатель литературы по русской нумизматике* [Zhitomir, 1904], p. 20.

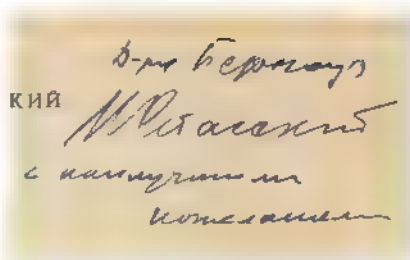


Figure 1. Ivan Georgievich Spassku, with a signed inscription in his hand.

looked down upon as a bourgeois pastime by the Communist authorities, and many private collections were “nationalized” (i.e., forcibly taken from their owners and integrated into national museum collections). While this created an environment in which traditional coin collecting activities were sharply curtailed, it also created unprecedentedly massive institutional holdings that were continually expanded by state appropriation of hoard finds and the like. These vast institutional collections would become the basis upon which scholars like Spassku would develop a scientific approach to numismatics that was primarily concerned with studying coins as artifacts of material culture and a means of examining the economic systems of the past. This approach to numismatic study was one that could persist under the Soviet regime and which did in fact flourish during those decades.

Spassku wrote several books and numerous articles during his career. His published volumes include two on the intriguing *yefimki*: *Талеры в русском денежном обращении 1654–1659 годов: сводный каталог ефимков*² and *Русские ефимки: исследование и каталог*.³ In 1963, he

² Leningrad, 1960

³ Novosibirsk, 1988.

published an infrequently seen work on foreign and Russian orders,⁴ and the following year wrote a small book on the 1825 pattern ruble of Grand Duke Constantine.⁵ In 1970, he published a book in Ukrainian on the numismatics of Ukraine.⁶ With E. S. Shchukina, he wrote a bilingual work on the *Medals and Coins of the Age of Peter the Great*.⁷

But it is for his classic work *The Russian Monetary System* (*Русская монетная система*) that Spasskii is best known. First published in Russian in 1957, it is an outstanding overview of Russian numismatic history. Being written by a Soviet scientific numismatist, it reflects perspectives one might expect: Spasskii examines the Russian coinage as aspects of material culture and studies them for what they tell us about economic history and power. At times, the Soviet context in which the book was published is obvious, with some of Spasskii's views on the progress of history reflecting the Marxist emphasis on historical materialism.

The first edition of Spasskii's magnum opus is a slender, modest volume (Figure 2).⁸ As with most Soviet publications of the age, the emphasis was on the quality of the research and not on the production of the physical volume: it is printed on cheap paper which browns with age, the photographs are fairly poor, and it is bound in thin boards. But the quality of the scholarship was top-notch, and the 1957 first edition was quickly followed by a second edition in 1960.⁹ There appears to be little difference between the two editions, with the format nearly identical. The first edition is somewhat scarce, at least outside Russia, and the second edition may be a bit scarcer.

While the second edition is essentially just a reprinting of the first, a third edition was published in 1962 that was considerably expanded.¹⁰ The volume jumped from a 124-page format to a 224-page format. While the production values of the expanded edition would win no prizes today, they were certainly a step up from the first and second editions.

The third edition clinched the reputation of the title as the standard work on the subject, and set in motion plans to translate it into English. Spasskii's text was translated by Z. I. Gorishina, whose text was

4 *Иностранные и русские ордена до 1917 года* (Leningrad, 1963).

5 *По следам одной редкой монеты* (Khudozhnik, 1964).

6 *Дукати і дукачі України* (Київ, 1970).

7 *Медальї і монети Петровського времени* (Leningrad, 1974).

8 *Русская монетная система* (Moscow, 1957).

9 *Русская монетная система* (Moscow, 1960).

10 *Русская монетная система* (Leningrad, 1962).



a



b



c



d

Figure 2. The four Russian editions of Spassku's classic text (a) the 1957 first edition, (b) 1960 second edition, (c) 1962 third edition; (d) 1970 fourth edition



Figure 3. Translations of *Русская монетная система* (a) the 1967 English translation; (b) the 1983 German translation.

then edited by Leonard S. Forrer. The result was published in 1967 by the Amsterdam firm of Jacques Schulman.¹¹ This translation brought Spasskii's work to a much wider audience and helped establish his international reputation (Figure 3). It also helped promote the study and collecting of Russian coins outside of the USSR, there being little available on the subject in English at the time (the works by Severin being the most notable exceptions).

As important as the translation was, it wasn't perfect. It is clumsy in places, and wooden in most. If Forrer (a perfectly good writer) massaged Gorishina's translation to make it more readable, he didn't exactly knock himself out. The final product could have used better editing and possibly a better translator to begin with. These criticisms aside, though, the book's appearance in English was truly important.

While the third edition was a notable expansion of the first two, Spasskii was not finished tinkering with the text, and a fourth Russian

¹¹ *The Russian Monetary System* (Amsterdam, 1967). The author's name is transliterated as Spassky on this title.

edition was published in 1970.¹² The book was now 256 pages long, and featured some revision and a small amount of new material. This was the final Russian edition. As a coda of sorts, a German translation of this edition was published in 1983, featuring additions through 1981.¹³

Ivan Spasskii died in 1990, living long enough to see the crumbling of the Soviet system in which he had worked during his career in numismatics. The collections at the State Hermitage Museum live on, of course, with over 1.1 million objects in the numismatic department alone. Spasskii was one of the few with the breadth of vision necessary to encompass the enormous span of Russian coinage and write a classic work on the subject.

¹² *Русская монетная система* (Leningrad, 1970).

¹³ *Das russische Münzsystem* (Berlin, 1983). The author's name is transliterated as Iwan Georgewitsch Spasski on this title.

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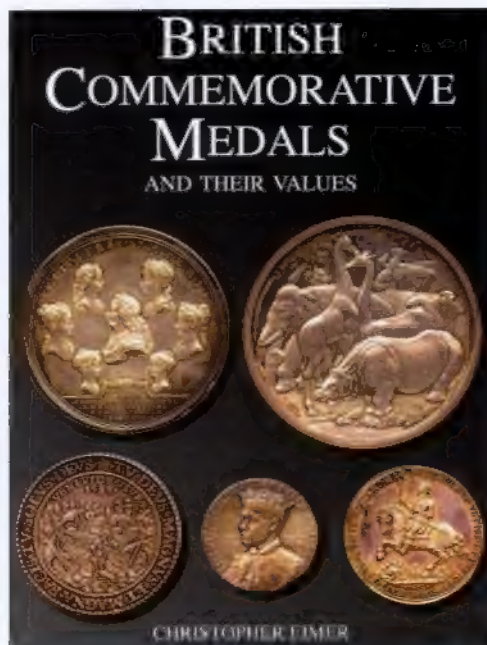
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